



group

deals 33 to 64, inclusive

20

Autobridge®

Advanced course

by Alfred Sheinwold

revised by Kit Woolsey

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Finesses . part 2

Part 1 included in group 19

The 64 deals of Group 19 and 20 are devoted to the most important play in bridge – the finesse. You scarcely ever play a hand in which there is no finesse, but there is a lot to know about finessing.

The finesse is an attempt to win a trick with a card that is not the highest card of its suit *after one opponent has already played to the trick.*

The variety of the ideas in Deals 33-64 may be seen from this partial list:

When *not* to finesse (continued from Group 19)

Which finesse to choose

Compound finesses

Finessing as a safety play

Which finesse to take *first*

Getting the opponents to finesse for you (end plays)

DEAL No. 33

		NORTH	
		♠ J 9 5	
		♥ 6 3	
		♦ K Q 5	
		♣ A Q J 10 4	
WEST		EAST	
♠ 7 4 3		♠ 6 2	
♥ K J 9 4 2		♥ 8 7	
♦ 10 6 3 2		♦ A J 9 8	
♣ 5		♣ K 9 8 7 2	
		SOUTH	
		♠ A K Q 10 8	
		♥ A Q 10 5	
		♦ 7 4	
		♣ 6 3	

North dealer
North-South vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♠	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
3 NT	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

As soon as North opens the bidding, South decides to reach game or slam. South has the values of an opening bid and therefore wants to bid a game when his partner likewise shows the values of an opening bid.

South begins quietly with a modest response of 1 ♠. The hand is not quite worth an immediate jump to 2 ♠.

When North raises spades, South shows his second suit, since it is possible that North also has a heart suit and is unable to show it after South's original response. North suggests notrump as a possible contract, but South's distribution makes a spade game much more logical.

South avoids getting past game because North avoids any show of extra strength. South has

15 points in high cards, and North's bidding indicates about 13 to 15. The total is not enough for slam.

The Play

Declarer must refuse the club finesse because the opening lead looks suspiciously like a singleton.

If South foolishly finesses the first club, East would win and return a club for West to ruff. Back would come a diamond to the ace and another club, which South would have to ruff high to prevent West from ruffing. Eventually, South would lose a heart trick, for down one.

South can make sure of the contract by putting up the ace of clubs at Trick 1. He then draws trumps and knocks out the king of clubs.

Declarer has to lose a heart finesse and the ace of diamonds but then takes the rest of the tricks without difficulty.

Moral: Beware of finessing when an opponent leads a singleton. You may lose a ruff or two as well as the king.

DEAL No. 34

		NORTH	
		♠ 8 4	
		♥ 5 4 2	
		♦ A 10	
		♣ A K Q J 6 2	
WEST		EAST	
♠ A K J 7 3 2		♠ 10 9 5	
♥ K 9		♥ J 10 8	
♦ 8 7 2		♦ 6 4 3	
♣ 8 3		♣ 10 9 5 4	
		SOUTH	
		♠ Q 6	
		♥ A Q 7 6 3	
		♦ K Q J 9 5	
		♣ 7	

West dealer
East-West vulnerable

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 ♠	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The Bidding

South would be far more optimistic about his hand if he had a singleton spade and two clubs. With his actual cards, he must expect to lose two spades right off the bat. If he is to make game, he can afford to lose only one other trick.

If North were ashamed of his overcall, he could pass South's bid of 2 ♥, since it is not forcing. Once he raises, however, South takes a chance and bids game. He knows that it is not guaranteed to make; much depends on the quality (and quantity) of North's heart support.

The Play

As feared, West takes two spades to begin with. He then leads a club and leaves declarer to his own devices.

Declarer's problem is to play the trumps in such a way as to

lose only one trick. Normally, a finesse of the queen of hearts would be the correct solution to the problem.

In this case, however, South expects such a finesse to lose. West has made a vulnerable opening bid with a suit headed by A-K-J at best and with no possible side cards except the king and jack of hearts.

If South loses the queen of hearts to the king, he will surely lose a second trump trick as well.

The only chance to make the hand, if West has the king of hearts, is to lead out the ace and then a small heart. This will work if West has to play his king of hearts on the second round of trumps.

Fortunately for South, West does have the doubleton king of hearts, and South draws trumps with the loss of only one trump trick.

When the bidding tells you that a finesse is quite sure to lose, try a ducking play instead of the finesse.

DEAL No. 35

NORTH			
♠ K 5 4			
♥ A 4			
♦ 6 3 2			
♣ K J 10 9 5			
WEST		EAST	
♠ Q 10 6		♠ 7 3	
♥ Q 10 5 3		♥ K 8 7 6	
♦ A 8 7		♦ Q J 10 9	
♣ 6 4 2		♣ 8 7 3	
SOUTH			
♠ A J 9 8 2			
♥ J 9 2			
♦ K 5 4			
♣ A Q			

South dealer
Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

North bids a side suit and then raises spades to show about 11 to 13 points in support of spades. This is a way of showing a hand that is too strong for a single raise but not strong enough for a double raise.

South can well afford to accept the invitation to game. He has 15 points in high cards, 1 point for the doubleton, and 1 point for the fifth card in a raised suit. The partnership total should easily be enough to yield a good play for game.

The Play

This is another "no finesse" hand. South must resist the temptation to finesse in trumps.

If South takes the trump finesse, West wins with the queen of spades and leads a heart to East.

Back comes a diamond, and South is down two!

The best chance for the hand is to draw the two top trumps first in the hope of dropping the queen. If the queen fails to drop, South runs the clubs, discarding diamonds from his hand.

The contract is safe if the player with the queen of trumps has as many as three clubs. South manages to get rid of two diamonds and holds the loss down to one trump, one heart, and one diamond.

South's plan would not work if West had only two clubs, but neither would anything else. The spade finesse is only an even chance, but the chance of picking up a doubleton queen of spades plus the chance that the player with Q-x-x of spades also has three or more clubs is almost a 2 to 1 shot.

DEAL No. 36

NORTH			
♠ Q J 10 7 3			
♥ K Q 9			
♦ 8 4			
♣ J 10 3			
WEST		EAST	
♠ 8 6 2		♠ A 9 4	
♥ 6 3 2		♥ 8 7 5 4	
♦ K 6 2		♦ J 10 9 7	
♣ Q 9 7 2		♣ A 5	
SOUTH			
♠ K 5			
♥ A J 10			
♦ A Q 5 3			
♣ K 8 6 4			

South dealer
North-South vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 NT	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

South's opening bid of 1 NT shows balanced distribution, strength in at least three suits, and 16 to 18 points.

North bids 2 ♣, the Stayman convention, to ask if South has a 4-card major suit. Since he has none, he responds 2 ♦.

North now bids 2 ♠. This shows a spade suit of five or more cards. North already knows that South lacks a 4-card major suit, so North would not bother to bid a 4-card major of his own. Moreover, North must have about 8 or 9 points for his bid, which invites a game. With fewer, North would not try for game; with more than 9 points, North would make a jump bid to make sure of getting to game.

Since South has more than his minimum value of 16 points, he can afford to accept the invitation. If he had 3-card support, he would bid a spade game; since he has only a doubleton spade, he jumps to 3 NT.

The Play

East wins the first trick with the ace of clubs and shifts to the jack of diamonds. South's first problem is whether or not to finesse.

South doesn't need two diamond tricks so has no need to finesse. He hopes to make game with 4 spades, 3 hearts, 1 diamond, and 1 club.

The danger of finessing in diamonds is that West may win with the king and return the suit to set up at least 3 diamond tricks for the defenders. These and the two black aces would be enough to defeat the contract.

South temporizes by stepping up with the ace of diamonds and knocking out the ace of spades. If West had that card, the diamonds would be safe from attack.

When East wins the ace of spades and continues the diamonds, South's safest course is to believe his opponent. East probably has four or more diamonds, and West has only two or three. South puts up the queen the next time, however, since East may just conceivably be leading from K-J-10. When the suit blocks, South is safe.

DEAL No. 37

NORTH	
♥	J 5 3
♠	A K 8
♦	6 5
♣	Q J 10 9 3
WEST	EAST
♥	K 7 4
♠	Q 5 3
♦	Q J 10 7
♣	A 4 2
SOUTH	
♥	A Q 10 9 8
♠	6 4 2
♦	A 2
♣	K 8 5

South dealer
East-West vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

North's bidding is a raise to $2\frac{1}{2}$ ♠, just as in Deal No. 35. He bids his own suit first and raises spades later, showing about 11 to 13 points in support of spades.

South can afford to accept the invitation to game since he has more than a bare minimum opening bid. South counts 13 points in high cards, 1 point for the doubleton, and 1 point for the fifth spade after North's raise. The full count is 15 points, which means that the combined count is about 26 to 28 points.

The Play

South counts his losers and sees a possible loser in each suit. Since this is one too many, he must look for a way to eliminate one.

Nothing can be done about the losers in clubs and diamonds. South may avoid the loss of a trump trick if he takes a winning finesse in that suit. He may avoid the loss of a heart trick if he can draw trumps and set up dummy's clubs in time to discard a heart.

South would be happy to adopt both plans if they could be combined. For example, if *dummy* had the ace of diamonds, he would win the diamond trick in dummy and try the spade finesse immediately.

Unfortunately, the ace of diamonds is in the *South* hand. To reach dummy for a spade finesse, South must use up one of the top hearts. This will help the plan for a spade finesse but will damage the plan for a heart discard.

Let's see how it would work out. South would lead a heart to dummy and would return the jack of spades for a finesse. West would win with the king of spades and would take one diamond. Then he would knock out dummy's remaining top heart. This would put West in position to cash a heart trick when he gained the lead with the ace of clubs. South would lose one trick in each suit, losing his game contract.

As the play on the deal sheet demonstrates, South can make sure of the game by abandoning the spade finesse. He wins the first diamond, leads out two rounds of trumps, and can draw trumps and set up the clubs before dummy's hearts are knocked out. This gives him time to discard a heart safely on dummy's long club suit.

DEAL No. 38

NORTH

♠ Q 7 6 3

♥ A K 5

♦ Q 4

♣ K 10 9 4

WEST

♠ 10 9 4 2

♥ 7 3

♦ J 10 9 7

♣ 7 5 2

EAST

♠ J 8 5

♥ Q 6 2

♦ K 8 6 5 2

♣ A Q

SOUTH

♠ A K

♥ J 10 9 8 4

♦ A 3

♣ J 8 6 3

South dealer
East-West vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♦	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

North's bidding in this hand may be compared with No. 35 and No. 37. He bids his side suit first but then jumps to game in South's original suit.

This indicates *more* than 11 to 13 points in support of South's major. North must have at least 14 points; he wants to make sure of reaching game even if South has a bare minimum opening bid.

You may wonder why North doesn't jump to 3 ♥ at his first turn if he has 14 points or more in support of hearts. The answer is that North has only 3-card trump support, and the immediate double raise promises at least 4 trumps.

In short, therefore, the *delayed* jump raise shows about 14 to 16 points with only *three* trumps; an *immediate* double raise shows

about 13 to 16 points with *four* good trumps. A delayed *single* raise shows about 11 to 13 points with three trumps or about 11 to 12 points with four trumps.

The Play

As in No. 37, South must decline to finesse to make sure of his contract. This time he must refuse finesses in *two* suits.

South plays the queen of diamonds from dummy at the first trick as a sort of finesse. It will hold the trick if West has led from the king. But East plays the king, and South must win with the ace.

Declarer must now discard his losing diamond on dummy's queen of spades. He cannot afford the heart finesse since if that lost the opponents would also take a diamond trick.

South can afford to lead out one round of trumps before he starts the spades. At Trick 5 he leads the jack of hearts just in case West is the sort of player who likes to cover honors. But South does not really plan to finesse in hearts.

After cashing the queen of spades, South must get to work on the clubs. Ideally, South would like to lead clubs from his own hand and finesse through West for the queen, but he cannot afford this luxury.

If South ruffs a spade in order to lead a club, East will take the queen of clubs and queen of hearts and will lead a diamond to force out South's last trump. South will then lose the rest!

DEAL No. 39

NORTH			
♠ K J 8 5			
♥ A K 6 4			
♦ 8			
♣ 6 5 3 2			
WEST		EAST	
♠ 4		♠ Q 3 2	
♥ Q 10 8 2		♥ J 9 5	
♦ K 9 5 3 2		♦ J 10 7 6	
♣ A 9 8		♣ Q J 10	
SOUTH			
♠ A 10 9 7 6			
♥ 7 3			
♦ A Q 4			
♣ K 7 4			

South dealer
East-West vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

North's raise to three spades shows good 4-card trump support and about 13 to 16 points in support of spades. The double raise is forcing to game.

South has a minimum opening bid and cannot afford to make a slam try. He carries on to game, ending the auction.

The Play

South has no losers in the red suits but may lose three clubs or unlucky.

At first glance South may think of leading out two top trumps or of finessing through one of the opponents for the queen. But if he does finesse, which opponent should he play to have three trumps?

Since declarer has no side suit winners to protect, it is not necessary for him to draw trumps early. Moreover, South can almost surely force the opponents to play the trumps for him if he tackles the other suits first.

He wins the first trick in dummy and gets to his hand with the ace of diamonds to lead another heart towards dummy. This provides for the possibility that the opening lead was a singleton.

From then on South cross-ruffs the red suits.

After the cross-ruff, declarer can afford to tackle the clubs. He doesn't mind losing to the ace, for then sooner or later somebody must lead a trump and thus give him a free finesse.

Experts call this type of play a "pick-up by cross-ruff."

DEAL No. 40

		NORTH			
		♠ Q 6 2			
		♥ 7 4 3			
		♦ K Q J 9 6			
		♣ 5 2			
WEST				EAST	
♠ 10 9 8 7				♠ A 5 4	
♥ Q 10 2				♥ J 9 8 5	
♦ A 8 4				♦ 7 3	
♣ Q 7 4				♣ 10 9 6 3	
		SOUTH			
		♠ K J 3			
		♥ A K 6			
		♦ 10 5 2			
		♣ A K J 8			

South dealer
Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♦	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

South's jump to 2 NT on his second turn shows about 19 or 20 points in high cards, balanced distribution, and strength in the unbid suits.

North, with 8 points in high cards, can see that the partnership count is 27 or 28 points. This should be enough for game, so North bids game in notrump. North does not rebid his diamond suit because his balanced distribution gives him no reason to shy away from notrump.

The Play

Since the contract is notrump, South begins his planning by counting winners. He sees two easy winners in each suit and must therefore try for one additional trick to make his contract.

South will have an easy time if he can set up and run dummy's diamonds, but he should not expect such luck. He should make other provision in case the defense is tight.

The only other chance is to develop a third club trick. The normal finesse of the jack of clubs offers one chance, but declarer should notice the additional chance presented by the eight of clubs.

South should lead a diamond to dummy and return a club to finesse the eight. If East has the 10-9 of clubs, this deep finesse will drive out the queen. But even if this finesse fails, South will later get to dummy with a diamond and will then be able to try the finesse of the jack of clubs.

In other words, the finesse of the 8 of clubs is an *additional* chance. If it wins, well and good;

if not, South will still have everything that he had before.

DEAL No. 41

NORTH

♠ K 9 7
♥ A 9 3
♦ 7 4 3
♣ A Q J 5

WEST

♠ 8 2
♥ Q J 10 6
♦ A K J 5
♣ 7 6 2

EAST

♠ 6 5
♥ 8 7 4 2
♦ 10 9 6
♣ K 10 9 8

SOUTH

♠ A Q J 10 4 3
♥ K 5
♦ Q 8 2
♣ 4 3

North dealer

Both sides vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
1 NT	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

North's rebid of 1 NT shows a near-minimum opening bid, just as in Series 19, Nos. 16, 17, and 19.

Since South wants to be in a spade game, he does not waste any time in exploration after North's minimum rebid, but merely bids what he thinks his side can make.

The Play

The opening lead makes it clear that South is threatened with the loss of three diamond tricks. If South also loses the club finesse, he will go down.

Declarer can expect to lose the normal club finesse since the play to the first two tricks indicates that West started with

A-K of diamonds and Q-J-10 of hearts. If West also held the king of clubs he might have entered the bidding at some point.

South solves his problem by letting West win the second trick with the ♥ Q. This gives the defenders an unnecessary heart trick but robs them of their club trick, since South later discards a club on dummy's ♥ A.

This discard permits South to take a ruffing finesse in clubs through East. If East plays low at Trick 8, South will cross his fingers and discard a diamond.

As it happens, East puts up the king of clubs, and South has an easy time from there on. (Note South's play of the ♦ 8 at trick one — if West can be encouraged into leading another diamond, South's prayers are answered immediately. By playing the eight, he is attempting to make West believe that East's six is an encouraging card, since West cannot be sure where the two is.)

DEAL No. 42

NORTH

♠ A J 5

♥ 7 3 2

♦ J 9 6

♣ K 5 3 2

WEST

♠ 9 7 6 4 3

♥ Q 9 4

♦ 7 2

♣ Q J 10

EAST

♠ K Q 10 2

♥ 8 6

♦ Q 5 4

♣ A 9 8 6

SOUTH

♠ 8

♥ A K J 10 5

♦ A K 10 8 3

♣ 7 4

*South dealer
Both sides vulnerable*

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	Pass	1 NT	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

North's response of 1 NT shows about 6 to 10 points and could be made with any of a large number of hands.

South cannot afford to force to game with his powerful 2-suiter because the North hand may be useless to him. He bids only 2 ♦, hoping that North will have enough to keep going. If North is so weak that he has to pass 2 ♦, it is very unlikely that game can be made.

North indicates a preference for hearts over diamonds. From his point of view, it is possible that 2 ♥ might be the final contract, if South has a minimum hand.

Even though North's bidding is far from encouraging, South can afford to invite a game by bidding 3 ♥. North accepts the invitation partly because his meagre strength is in the form of an ace and a king rather than in queens and jacks, and partly because the jack of diamonds may be a useful card.

The Play

The opening lead makes it clear that the king of clubs is worthless. The opponents finesse through it, forcing South to ruff the third club.

Now South can get to dummy just once—with the ace of spades—but needs finesses in both red suits. Which should he choose?

The answer is easily chosen. Declarer tries a diamond finesse. If it should lose, he can get back to dummy with the jack of diamonds and can then try the heart finesse. If South, instead, tried the heart finesse and lost it, he would be unable to get back to dummy for the diamond finesse.

When the nine of diamonds holds Trick 6, South has a slight problem. Conceivably, West is craftily holding off with ♦ Q-x-x. Perhaps one diamond finesse is enough, and South's best play may be to try the heart finesse next.

Nevertheless, South should try the diamonds again. East may have ♦ Q-x-x-x, and a second finesse may be needed. In this case, of course, West will be able to ruff, but South will still be safe if West's ruff costs him his natural trump trick.

As it happens, all of these fears are unfounded. The rest of the play is uneventful.

DEAL No. 43

NORTH

♠ K Q 6 4 3
♥ 6
♦ 8 7 4 3 2
♣ A 6

WEST

♠ J 10 9
♥ Q 7 3
♦ K J 6 5
♣ K 8 2

EAST

♠ A 8 7 5 2
♥ 5 2
♦ 9
♣ J 10 9 7 3

SOUTH

♠ None
♥ A K J 10 9 8 4
♦ A Q 10
♣ Q 5 4

*South dealer
Both sides vulnerable*

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

South's jump to 3 ♥ at his second turn shows a strong suit of at least 6 cards with about 8 winners and more than minimum strength in high cards. It is not forcing to game but is highly invitational.

North can well afford to go on since he has 9 points in high cards. Since he lacks support, he cannot raise hearts; since he has unbalanced distribution he cannot bid notrump. He therefore rebids his suit.

South is not the least bit interested in spades — if North had been able to show some other suit, perhaps South would have proceeded further; from his point of view 4 ♥ is the only possible game contract.

The Play

The opening lead permits South to set up a spade trick in dummy. South goes over to dummy with the ace of clubs to take his discard, but has two problems:

1. What to discard—a diamond or a club?
2. Which finesse to take?

South decides to discard a diamond in the hope of ruffing a club in the dummy. He cannot expect to ruff a diamond.

It is easy to eliminate the trump finesse from consideration. There is a substantial chance of dropping the queen of hearts even if South cannot take the finesse; there is far less chance of similar luck in clubs or diamonds.

There is a good reason for leading a club rather than a diamond at Trick 4. If East has the king of clubs, he can take the trick and lead a trump, but South's queen of clubs will then be good. If West has the king of clubs, he can capture the queen but may not be able to lead a trump without sacrificing a trump trick.

So it turns out. West tries the trump return at Trick 5 in the hope that his partner has the ♥ J. This costs him a trump trick, but preserves the club trick for the defense.

DEAL No. 44

NORTH

♠ K J 9 8 6
♥ 9 3
♦ A K 6
♣ 10 6 2

WEST

♠ 10 7 3 2
♥ 10 8 7
♦ 9 8
♣ J 9 7 3

EAST

♠ A Q 4
♥ 6 5
♦ J 10 4 2
♣ A K Q 8

SOUTH

♠ 5
♥ A K Q J 4 2
♦ Q 7 5 3
♣ 5 4

North dealer

North-South vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♠	1 NT	Double	2 ♣
Pass	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

East's overcall of 1 NT shows about 16 to 18 points, much like an opening bid of 1 NT.

South doubles partly to show his strength and partly because he expects to tear East apart.

As it happens, West runs out to 2 ♣, fearing the worst at 1 NT doubled.

Since South cannot do serious damage to 2 ♣, he next makes a jump bid in his powerful major suit. North rebids the spades, and South goes on to game in hearts.

The Play

South counts points and sees 23 points in the North-South hands. This leaves 17 points for East-West, with at least 16 held by East for his bid of 1 NT. West may hold a jack, but is most unlikely to have anything more.

The opening lead is almost surely the top of a doubleton. Apparently diamonds will not break, the spades are offside, and misery is declarer's lot.

The best chance is to play West for the ♠ 10. South therefore draws trumps and finesses dummy's ♠ 8. The finesse works, forcing out East's queen of spades.

This is enough to assure the contract. South can get to dummy with the ♦ K to lead the ♠ K through East for a ruffing finesse. Having ruffed out the ♠ A, South can get back to dummy with the ♦ A to cash the ♠ J.

(This hand was dealt in the 1958 Open Pair Championship and was bid and played in this way by several experts. Note the very light opening bid by North — most experts tend to open a hand with a long spade suit on any excuse.)

DEAL No. 45

NORTH

♠ A 5 3 2
♥ 7 6 4
♦ K Q 9
♣ K 8 2

WEST

♠ Q J 9 8
♥ K Q J 10
♦ J 10 2
♣ Q 5

EAST

♠ 10 7
♥ 9 8 2
♦ 7 6 5 3
♣ J 10 7 6

SOUTH

♠ K 6 4
♥ A 5 3
♦ A 8 4
♣ A 9 4 3

South dealer

North-South vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♣	Double	Redouble	Pass
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	Pass
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

West has a somewhat sketchy takeout double of 1 ♣, and North shows his strength by a redouble. This is passed around to West, who rescues himself in his short but powerful heart suit.

North can afford to pass, since his redouble is forcing: South must either double 1 ♥ or bid on. South would be happy to accept a double of 1 ♥ if North had doubled, but he is unwilling to initiate a double of his own. He therefore bids 1 NT, showing a heart stopper and balanced distribution.

North immediately raises to 3 NT. He has 12 points in high cards opposite an opening bid and wants to be in game.

The Play

South counts 8 tricks in high cards and needs one additional trick for his contract. That trick can be won only in one of the black suits.

West's takeout double promises support for the major suits and therefore makes it very unlikely that the spades will break 3-3. South must therefore turn his attention to the clubs.

West is likely to be short in clubs since he promised support in the other suits. All will be well if West has a singleton or doubleton honor in clubs.

The method is to lead a club from the South hand and finesse dummy's eight as a preliminary move. This loses, as expected.

Subsequently, declarer leads the ♣ K from dummy to pick up West's honor. He is then in position to take a finesse through East to make the additional club trick.

DEAL No. 46

		NORTH	
		♠	A 5 4
		♥	K 4 2
		♦	A 6 2
		♣	Q 8 6 4
WEST		EAST	
♠	9 8 2	♠	Q J 10 6
♥	Q J 10 7	♥	9 8
♦	10 4	♦	Q J 9 8 7
♣	J 10 7 3	♣	K 5
		SOUTH	
		♠	K 7 3
		♥	A 6 5 3
		♦	K 5 3
		♣	A 9 2

North dealer
North-South vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♣	1 ♦	2 NT	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

South's jump to 2 NT promises balanced distribution, 13 to 15 points in high cards, and strength in all unbid suits. (Actually, a 1 ♥ bid would not be incorrect; however, since 2 NT is forcing, there is time to find the heart fit later.)

North has a minimum opening bid and no 4-card major, so he merely raises to game.

North has a sketchy opening bid, but his 13 points are just about enough for action. South's response is forcing to game, so North carries on to game in no-trump.

The Play

South has 7 tricks in top cards and must look for 2 additional tricks to make the contract. The only real hope lies in clubs.

In the absence of any bidding, South would lead out the ace of clubs and then lead a club towards dummy's queen, in the hope that West had the K-x-x of clubs.

Since East has overcalled, however, South must expect to find the ♣ K in the East hand. The suit will produce three tricks only if East has the singleton or doubleton king.

The method closely resembles the play in No. 45. South takes a preliminary finesse of the ♣ 9, losing to West. Later, South leads another club and picks up East's king. The road is then clear for a finesse through West for the remaining two club tricks.

DEAL No. 47

NORTH

♠ J 8 5
♥ A 5 3
♦ 5 3 2
♣ K 6 4 3

WEST

♠ K 7 2
♥ K J 7
♦ Q J 10
♣ A Q 7 2

EAST

♠ 6
♥ 10 6
♦ A 9 8 7 6
♣ J 10 9 8 5

SOUTH

♠ A Q 10 9 4 3
♥ Q 9 8 4 2
♦ K 4
♣ None

South dealer

East-West vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	1 NT	2 ♠	3 ♦
3 ♥	Pass	3 ♠	4 ♣
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

South has only 11 points in high cards but should not dream of passing his powerful two-suiter in the majors.

West's overcall of 1 NT shows 16 to 18 points, with at least one stopper in the bid suit.

When North shows spade support plus a few high card points,

South shows his other major, just in case North prefers a heart contract. East shows his two suits, but South disregards him. The decision to bid game is aggressive, but well justified — South needs only a couple of helpful cards in dummy to have a reasonable play for the contract.

The Play

When East shows up with the ♦ A at Trick 1, South can locate virtually all of the remaining high cards in the deck. East may have another jack, but he cannot have more if West has 16 points.

It is very likely that West has K-J-x of hearts and K-x or K-x-x of spades. How is South to avoid the loss of two heart tricks?

Declarer must execute a compound (two-stage) finesse, just as in Nos. 45 and 46.

In the first stage, declarer leads a low heart from dummy and finesses the 9 from his hand. This loses, as expected.

Later, at Trick 9, South leads the ♥ Q from his hand. This captures East's ♥ 10 and serves to finesse through the king at the same time.

DEAL No. 48

NORTH	
♠	Q J 10 3
♥	Q 9 8 4
♦	7
♣	K Q 10 6
WEST	EAST
♠	6
♥	A 10 3
♦	K Q J 10 4 3
♣	9 5 2
SOUTH	
♠	A K 9 8 4 2
♥	5 2
♦	A 8
♣	8 4 3

South dealer
East-West vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	2 ♦	3 ♠	4 ♦
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

North's jump to 3 ♠ is just the same whether made over a bid or over a pass. It promises strong trump support of at least 4 cards, with 13 to 16 points for play at spades. In this case, North has 10 points in high cards, 3 points for the singleton, and something extra for the honors in partner's bid suit.

Incidentally, this might be a good spot to remind you that you give extra value to short suits when you have good trump support for your partner's suit. With 4-card trump support (or more), count 3 points for a singleton, 5 points for a void. You count only 2 points for a singleton and 3 points for a void when you are counting your hand for a suit of your own.

East raises diamonds, but South carries on to game in spades.

The Play

South must lose two hearts and must therefore avoid the loss of two clubs. The chief hope is to find the ace or jack of clubs in the West hand, but the interesting spot cards in hearts provide an additional chance.

After drawing a round of trumps, South should lead a low heart toward dummy. A finesse loses to East's jack. Apparently West has the ten of hearts.

East returns a trump, and South wins and continues with his other heart. West's play of the ace is very revealing.

West surely knows his partner has the ♥ K. Why does West step up with the ♥ A instead of playing low?

Obviously, West must have started with ♥ A-10-x. He could not afford to play ♥ 10 at Trick 5, since that would give the show away. Hence he was forced to step up with the ♥ A.

South is not deceived when dummy's ♣ K holds the next trick. East almost surely has the ♣ A for his bid of 4 ♦. He would not venture to this level with only ♥ K-J and a smattering of small cards.

Now South takes advantage of what he has learned about the hearts. At Trick 7 he leads the ♥ Q from dummy, ruffing out the king and picking up the 10 at the same time.

Compare with the compound finesse in No. 47.

DEAL No. 49

The Play

NORTH

♠ J 6 4 3
♥ Q 8 3
♦ J 10 7 3
♣ K 5

WEST

♠ None
♥ K 7 6 5 2
♥ 9 5 4
♣ J 10 9 4 3

EAST

♠ K 10 9 2
♥ J 10 9 4
♦ 8 2
♣ A Q 6

SOUTH

♠ A Q 8 7 5
♥ A
♦ A K Q 6
♣ 8 7 2

*South dealer
Both sides vulnerable*

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

North's single raise shows about 7 to 10 points with trump support. North actually has 7 points in high cards, 1 point for the doubleton, and something extra for the jack of partner's bid suit.

South now revalues his hand: 19 points in high cards, 2 points for the singleton, and 1 point for the fifth spade after North has raised the suit. His total is 22 points, easily enough for a jump to game.

After the loss of the first two tricks, South must limit the trump loss to one trick.

This will be easy if the trumps break 3-1 or 2-2. Even if the finesse loses, South will then be able to draw the rest of the trumps without loss.

What can South do about the possible 4-0 trump break?

If *West* has all four trumps, nothing can be done. West will make his two tricks and will defeat the contract.

If *East* has all four trumps, something can be done. The *safety play* is to lead the jack of spades from dummy for the first finesse.

East must cover with the king, and South wins with the ace. West's discard reveals the bad trump break.

The rest of the play is easy. East is held to one trump trick.

South would lose the contract if he led a *low* trump from the dummy at Trick 4. East would play the deuce, and South would finesse the queen. Now East would be sure of two trump tricks.

DEAL No. 50

		NORTH	
		♠ 10 7 2	
		♥ A 6 2	
		♦ K 10 9	
		♣ Q 10 6 3	
WEST		EAST	
♠ A K Q 4 3		♠ J 9 8 6	
♥ 8 3		♥ J 10 9 5	
♦ 6 5 3		♦ 4	
♣ J 7 2		♣ K 9 8 4	
		SOUTH	
		♠ 5	
		♥ K Q 7 4	
		♦ A Q J 8 7 2	
		♣ A 5	

West dealer
Both sides vulnerable

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♦
1 ♠	2 ♦	2 ♠	3 ♥
Pass	4 ♦	Pass	5 ♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

The Bidding

South is willing to go to 5 ♦ after North's raise, but can afford to trot out the hearts on the way. North might have 4-card support for hearts, in which case 4 ♥ would be a reasonable game contract.

The Play

South must find a way to dispose of his fourth heart. All will be well if the trumps break 2-2, for then South can eventually ruff out his last heart. There will be no problem, likewise, if the hearts break 3-3, since then the last heart will be good.

When the trumps fail to break, South must make provision for a bad heart break as well. The best chance is a successful finesse in clubs.

Should South plan to finesse dummy's ♣ 10 or ♣ Q?

The answer comes when East follows with ♠ J at Trick 5. Evidently East has raised spades with ♠ J-x-x-x, and West has bid the suit with ♠ A-K-Q-x-x. West cannot also have the ♣ K since he passed as dealer.

This leads South to the correct play in clubs at Trick 8.

DEAL No. 51

		NORTH	
		♠ 7 5	
		♥ Q J 2	
		♦ A J 9 4	
		♣ K 10 7 5	
WEST		EAST	
♠ Q 2		♠ A 4 3	
♥ 7 4		♥ A 10 8 5	
♦ Q 5 3 2		♦ K 10 8 7	
♣ Q 8 6 3 2		♣ J 9	
		SOUTH	
		♠ K J 10 9 8 6	
		♥ K 9 6 3	
		♦ 6	
		♣ A 4	

North dealer
North-South vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
3 NT	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

South has only 11 points in high cards, but his excellent distribution gives him an opening bid in any position.

North's jump to 2 NT after an original pass shows about 11 or 12 points in high cards, with balanced distribution and strength in the unbid suits.

South naturally rebids the spades, and North goes on to game in notrump. South is worried about notrump because of his 6-4-2-1 distribution and therefore tries the hearts.

By rebidding the spades before showing the hearts, South indicates a very strong preference for the spades. The hearts are surely a 4-card suit, and the spades are either a very strong 5-carter or a 6-card suit.

North has better support for hearts but goes back to spades to place the game in what should be the partnership's better suit.

The Play

Declarer wins the first diamond in dummy and tries the spade finesse. The main chance to limit the trump loss to one trick is to find the queen of spades in the East hand.

The finesse loses, and South must draw trumps and work on the hearts. Eventually, South must decide whether to play for a 3-3 break in hearts or finesse East for the ♥ 10.

During the course of the play East shows up with ♠ A, ♥ A, ♦ K, and ♣ J. At Trick 11, it is clear that East's last cards are either one heart and the ♣ Q or two hearts. Which?

Since the ♣ Q would give East 14 points in high cards, it must be ruled out. East passed in second position, and he would have opened the bidding with 14 points.

South therefore places East with two hearts and takes the finesse at Trick 12.

As in No. 50, an opponent's pass can tell you as much as his bids.

DEAL No. 52

		NORTH	
		♠ A K 8 4	
		♥ Q 7	
		♦ Q 9 8 3	
		♣ K 10 4	
WEST		EAST	
♠ Q 10 5 3		♠ J 9 7 2	
♥ A K J 9 5 2		♥ 8 4	
♦ 7 4		♦ 10 2	
♣ 3		♣ Q 8 7 5 2	
		SOUTH	
		♠ 6	
		♥ 10 6 3	
		♦ A K J 6 5	
		♣ A J 9 5	

South dealer

Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♦	1 ♥	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	5 ♦	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

South's bidding is very normal. He begins with his longer suit and then shows the other suit.

North rules out notrump for lack of a stopper in hearts. He sees that there should be a reasonable play for game in diamonds and therefore goes all the way to game.

South has only a minimum opening bid, so is content to stop at game.

The Play

South is obliged to ruff the third heart with dummy's queen of diamonds to prevent an over-ruff. Fortunately, the trumps break 2-2, so the queen of diamonds can be spared.

The big problem is how to finesse for the queen of clubs. South can finesse in either direction.

Declarer tries to get a count to find out which opponent has more clubs. After drawing trumps, declarer plays four rounds of spades.

By this time it becomes clear that West held six hearts (since East discarded on the third heart), four spades, and two diamonds. This accounts for 12 of West's original 13 cards. Only one card could be a club.

South draws that one club from West by leading to dummy's king. He can then finesse in perfect safety through East.

DEAL No. 53

		NORTH	
		♠ 7 3 2	
		♥ 7 4	
		♦ 6 5 3 2	
		♣ A J 9 7	
WEST		EAST	
♠ K Q J 10 6		♠ 9 8 4	
♥ 3		♥ J 6 5 2	
♦ K Q J 10 9		♦ 8 4	
♣ 5 2		♣ Q 10 8 4	
		SOUTH	
		♠ A 5	
		♥ A K Q 10 9 8	
		♦ A 7	
		♣ K 6 3	

West dealer

North-South vulnerable

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 ♠	Pass	Pass	Double
2 ♦	Pass	2 ♠	3 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

The Bidding

After the opening bid of 1 ♠ is passed, South reopens the bidding.

When West shows his second suit, North is relieved of his obligation to bid. With very few high card points and no long suit, he passes. (If West had passed, North would have had to bid his club suit.)

After East shows a preference for spades, South shows the full power of his hand by bidding three hearts. He still has hope of making game even though he suspects that North must have very little.

North makes a close decision to go on to game in hearts. The clubs should be useful, but North's raise to game is largely a vote of confidence in South's ability to get the most out of the cards.

The Play

West's bidding probably indicates 10 cards in spades and diamonds. If West has a singleton heart, declarer must finesse through East for the jack. If West has a doubleton heart, such a finesse is unnecessary and dangerous.

How can South find out whether or not to take the trump finesse?

Declarer can count West's trumps by finding out how many clubs he holds. After taking one precautionary round of trumps, South leads the king of clubs and then a low club toward dummy.

If West has only a singleton in clubs, he cannot gain by ruffing at Trick 4; he will just ruff out South's club loser. Whether West ruffs or discards, South will

now play him to have two hearts. When West follows to two rounds of clubs, it is likely that he started with only one heart. Declarer now plays a heart from dummy and finesses East for the jack.

DEAL No. 54

NORTH

♠ A K 8
♥ A Q J 6 2
♦ K J
♣ 10 9 7

WEST

♠ 7 6 3
♥ 7 3
♦ 9 8 7 6 4
♣ Q 8 3

EAST

♠ None
♥ K 9 8 5
♦ A Q 10 5 3 2
♣ 6 5 2

SOUTH

♠ Q J 10 9 5 4 2
♥ 10 4
♦ None
♣ A K J 4

South dealer

North-South vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 ♠	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
5 ♣	Pass	6 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

North's immediate jump take-out into a new suit is a force to game and a try for slam. The general requirement for such a bid is 17 points or more, counting distribution as well as high cards. Another way of putting it is that you should be able to visualize a possible slam even if the opening bid is a minimum providing that there is a fit in a suit.

South has a minimum opening bid in high cards, but his distribution is excellent, and he has

two first-round controls—the ace of clubs and the void in diamonds. Slam is a virtual certainty, and South should make a slam try (once North shows his fit) by bidding his cheapest control — the ace of clubs.

North promptly jumps to six spades, and South should be content.

Note that South does not dream of using the Blackwood Convention. When a player has a void, he is not interested in the *number* of aces his partner has — but in *which* aces he holds.

The Play

South ruffs the opening lead, draws trumps, and tries the heart finesse. If this succeeds, he may be able to run the entire heart suit, discarding both low clubs from his hand.

The finesse succeeds—at least South's ♥ 10 wins Trick 5, but South should not repeat the finesse. It is quite possible that East is craftily holding off with the ♥ K. If so, the second heart finesse will lose, and then South will have to lose a club trick as well.

Declarer can make sure of the slam by winning the second heart with dummy's ace and then going after the clubs.

It is important to note that South must try the heart finesse before working on the clubs. If the heart finesse should lose, declarer will still be able to discard his low clubs. But if South took the club finesse first and lost, he would still have to lose a heart trick.

DEAL No. 55

NORTH

♠ J 6
♥ Q 10 8 7 3 2
♦ 5 4 2
♣ J 10

WEST

♠ A 9 8 3
♥ 5
♦ 10 9 8 7
♣ 8 5 3 2

EAST

♠ Q 10 7 5 2
♥ 6
♦ 6 3
♣ K 9 7 6 4

SOUTH

♠ K 4
♥ A K J 9 4
♦ A K Q J
♣ A Q

South dealer
North-South vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
6 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

In modern bidding methods, South's opening bid of 2 ♥ is just about forcing to game. (There is one exception — if South rebids 3 ♥ after his partner's negative response of 2 NT, partner is allowed to pass with a complete Yarborough.)

The requirements for an opening bid of two can be stated in points, but there are better methods for determining the requirements for this bid. In general, any hand with 18 or more high card points which is within one trick of game can be opened with a strong two bid in a suit. One-suited hands lend themselves better to this approach than multi-suited hands, since you are often too high before you can find a suit fit with the latter.

With 27 high card points, South wants to be in game even if North has absolutely nothing, so he opens with a forcing 2 ♥ call. North's jump to 4 ♥ has a traditional meaning of good trump support, no outside ace or king, singleton or void. With this information, South knows that there is no play for a grand slam, while all that he needs to make a small slam is the queen of spades in dummy.

The Play

South must play East for either the ace of spades or the king of clubs to make the slam. Which?

The answer is that South can make *both* tries if he makes them in the correct order.

After drawing trumps, South runs the diamonds to discard a spade from dummy. Then he can lead a spade from dummy through East. If East has the ace of spades, South will be able to discard a club from dummy on the king of spades.

When the spade attempt loses, South can return to dummy and try the club finesse. This works, and the slam is home.

It would be wrong to try the club finesse first. If it lost, the defenders would immediately take the ♠ A to set the slam. With this line of play, the contract depends solely on the location of the ♠ K, instead of either the ♠ K or the ♠ A.

DEAL No. 56

NORTH

♠ 10 3
♥ Q 7 3
♦ K Q J 6
♣ K 5 4 3

WEST

♠ J 8 5
♥ J 8 4
♦ 10 9 8 7
♣ 7 6 2

EAST

♠ K 9 7 6 2
♥ K 10 9 5 2
♦ 5 4
♣ 8

SOUTH

♠ A Q 4
♥ A 6
♦ A 3 2
♣ A Q J 10 9

South dealer

North-South vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2 NT	Pass	6 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

South's opening bid of 2 NT promises balanced distribution, strength in at least three suits, and a count of 22 to 24 points. It is unusual, but permissible, to have a 5-card minor suit. In this case South has only 21 points in high cards but is right in stretching a point with all four aces and a nearly-solid suit.

North has 11 points and assumes that the combined count is 33 to 35 points. This is enough for a small slam, but not for a grand slam, so North jumps directly to 6 NT.

South might have opened with a two-bid in his long suit if it had been a major. He would then have reached a slam in the suit—which is ice cold. The play for 6 NT is harder, and illustrates an important point of play.

The Play

South counts 11 sure tricks—1 spade, 1 heart, 4 diamonds, and 5 clubs. The slam is home if he can make an additional trick with the ♠ Q or the ♥ Q.

The problem is which queen to try for first.

Declarer may run the clubs first in the hope of finding something out, but then he must try the *heart* play first. He must lead the low heart toward dummy *without first releasing the ♥ A*.

If West has the ♥ K, the slam will be home. If East has the ♥ K, South will still have everything under control and be able to try the spade finesse as a second string to his bow.

It would be wrong to try the spade finesse first. If that finesse lost, South would have no further chance for a trick in hearts—no matter which opponent held the ♥ K.

DEAL No. 57

NORTH	
♠	K 6 2
♥	K 5 4
♦	J 9 3 2
♣	K J 4
WEST	EAST
♠	Q 10 7 3
♥	J 10 9 8 2
♦	K 7 6
♣	2
SOUTH	
♠	A 8 4
♥	A 6
♦	A 5 4
♣	A 9 6 5 3

South dealer Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

South's opening bid of 1 NT shows balanced distribution strength in at least 3 suits, and 16 to 18 points in high cards.

North adds his 11 points to those shown by South and sees that the combined count must be 27 to 29. This should be enough for game; there is no reason to look for game in anything but no-trump.

The Play

South has 7 top tricks and must try to develop the clubs to make the two additional tricks.

If South needed 5 club tricks he would lead a low club from his hand toward dummy with the intention of finessing the jack. Since he needs only 4 club tricks, he can afford to execute the standard safety play.

The safety play is to cash the ♣ K, get to the South hand in another suit, and then lead a low club toward dummy's jack. This guards against Q-10-x-x on either side.

If West held ♣ Q-10-x-x he would be able to win the second club, but then South would clear the suit with the ♣ J and ♣ A. If West failed to take the second club trick, dummy's jack would win; and then South could take the ♣ A and give up a club.

If East holds ♣ Q-10-x-x (as shown), West discards, and East captures dummy's jack with the queen. Declarer can later enter dummy and finesse through East's ♣ 10-x.

South needn't worry about the suit if it breaks 3-2. His safety play may give up the chance to win all 5 club tricks, but he doesn't mind paying this price to make sure of 4 tricks.

Note that South would go down if he took the ♣ A first and then led a club toward dummy. East would be sure of two club tricks.

DEAL No. 58

NORTH

♠ K 8 5 3
♥ A Q 10
♦ A 6
♣ Q 10 9 2

WEST

♠ Q 10 7 4
♥ K 9 8 5
♦ Q 9
♣ A 7 4

EAST

♠ None
♥ 6 4 2
♦ K J 10 8 7 5 3
♣ 6 5 3

SOUTH

♠ A J 9 6 2
♥ J 7 3
♦ 4 2
♣ K J 8

East dealer

North-South vulnerable

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH
3 ♦	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

The Bidding

East's opening bid of 3 ♦ is an attempt to rob North-South of bidding room. He cannot seriously hope to shut the opponents out if they hold game-going strength, but he may force them to make up their minds at a high level about their suit and about how much to bid.

South cannot afford to overcall at the level of three. East is known to have a very weak hand, but there is no law that says West also has a weak hand. South's hand will take perhaps 4 or 5 tricks, and it doesn't become stronger merely because one opponent confesses weakness.

The story is different, however, when North reopens with a takeout double. Now South must come out from behind the bushes. If South bid only 3 ♠, he might have absolutely nothing, and North would pass and hope that partner can make the part score. With the cards he actually holds, South should make sure of getting to game by jumping right to it.

The Play

The chief point of the play is the management of the trump suit. South must take the bidding into account.

In the absence of any bidding by East-West, declarer might begin the trumps by leading dummy's king. East's show of length in diamonds warns of shortness in other suits. South guards against a void in spades by leading a *low* trump from dummy at Trick 2.

As the play develops, South does not need the heart finesse. If he needed it, he would take it. There isn't much doubt about the location of the ♥ K, since East's shutout bid tends to deny side strength.

DEAL No. 59

		NORTH			
		♠ A K J			
		♥ 8 4 3			
		♦ A 9 6 4			
		♣ A Q J			
WEST				EAST	
♠ 7 2				♠ 9 8 6 5 3	
♥ 10 9 5				♥ K 7 6 2	
♦ Q 10 8 2				♦ 7	
♣ 10 9 8 7				♣ 6 4 2	
		SOUTH			
		♠ Q 10 4			
		♥ A Q J			
		♦ K J 5 3			
		♣ K 5 3			

South dealer

Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
1 NT	Pass	6 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

South's opening bid of 1 NT shows balanced distribution, strength in at least 3 suits, and 16 to 18 points.

North counts his own 19 points and sees that the combined count is 35 to 37 points. If North had any distribution but 4-3-3-3 he would try for a grand slam; as it is, he settles for a small slam in notrump.

The Play

South needs six tricks from the red suits to make the slam. He will be content with 2 hearts and 4 diamonds or 3 tricks in each suit.

If South needs 4 diamonds, he will begin with a low diamond from dummy toward the South hand. His intention would be to finesse the jack, but he would

also succeed if East had the singleton queen.

If South needs only 3 diamonds, he can begin with the king and then lead a low diamond toward dummy with the intention of finessing the nine.

Which play in diamonds should South adopt?

The only way South can find out how many diamond tricks he needs is to try the heart finesse first. When he finds out that he will surely win 3 heart tricks, he can afford to take the safety play in diamonds. If the heart finesse lost, South would have to go for all 4 diamond tricks.

Note that the safety play would work equally well if *East*, rather than *West*, held ♦ Q-10-x-x. West would discard on the second diamond, and declarer would win in dummy with the ♦ A. He would then return a diamond toward the jack, thus getting a third trick in the suit.

Compare with the similar safety play in No. 57.

DEAL No. 60

NORTH	
♠ Q 10 6 2	
♥ K 5 4 2	
♦ 9 8 5	
♣ A J	
WEST	EAST
♠ A J 9 8 5 4	♠ K 7 3
♥ Q 9 6 3	♥ None
♦ None	♦ 10 7 6 3 2
♣ 8 4 2	♣ 10 9 7 5 2
SOUTH	
♠ None	
♥ A J 10 8 7	
♦ A K Q J 4	
♣ K Q 6	

South dealer
Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2 ♥	Pass	3 ♥	Pass
4 ♦	Pass	5 ♣	Pass
6 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

The Bidding

South's opening bid of 2 ♥ is just about forcing to game. (For the basic principles of the opening two bid, see comments on Deal 55.)

In this case South can expect to win about 3 hearts, 5 diamonds, and at least 1 club. He has 4 quick tricks and 9 winners, so can just about afford the two-bid.

North begins a slam quest by raising hearts. At his next turn he shows the ace of clubs. South needs nothing more to bid a slam.

(Another expert bid which South could have employed after his partner showed the ♠ A is called the Grand Slam Force. Instead of going directly to 6 ♥, South could bid 5 NT, which asks partner to bid 7 ♥ with two of the top three honors in hearts and 6 ♥ with any lesser holding. On this particular hand, North does not have the two honors, so the final contract would have been 6 ♥ in any case.)

The Play

South ruffs the opening spade lead and must then execute the safety play of beginning the trumps with the ace.

When *West* shows up with four trumps, South can limit the trump loss to one trick as shown on the deal sheet.

If *East* had all four trumps, South would duck the jack of trumps around to him and could then ruff a spade return and draw trumps.

When the hand was played in the other table of a team match, the other declarer began the trumps at Trick 2 by leading the ♥ 8 to dummy's king. He then had to lose two trump tricks. West could capture the ♥ 10 with his queen, and could then lead another spade to force South to ruff with ♥ J.

It pays to think ahead before planning your method of finesse. See if you can handle the worst possible trump break.

DEAL No. 61

NORTH

♠ 8 4 3
♥ 8 4 3
♦ K J 10 9 3
♣ 6 4

WEST

♠ K 7 5
♥ K 6
♦ 6 5 2
♣ K Q J 9 7

EAST

♠ J 10 9 6 2
♥ J 10 9 7 5
♦ 7
♣ 6 2

SOUTH

♠ A Q
♥ A Q 2
♦ A Q 8 4
♣ A 8 5 3

South dealer
Both sides vulnerable

SOUTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

South's opening bid of 2 NT shows balanced distribution strength in at least three suits, and 22 to 24 points.

North is expected to raise with 4 points—and does so.

The Play

South can expect to win 5 diamonds and his three aces. How should he play for the ninth trick?

If South takes a finesse in spades or hearts, he will lose the finesse and 4 club tricks. He cannot be sure that West has both kings, but he doesn't need to take the risk.

South holds up the first and second tricks to find out how many clubs West has. Then he can afford to run three diamonds, ending in his hand.

Finally, South gives West his club tricks. When West has finished with the clubs—only four tricks—he must lead either a spade or a heart. South is sure to get a free finesse—and his ninth trick without risk.

DEAL No. 62

NORTH	
♠	A Q 4
♥	J 9 4
♦	K Q 10 7 3
♣	A Q
WEST	EAST
♠	J 9 8 5 2
♥	8 7 3 2
♦	6
♣	10 4 2
	♠ K 10 7 3
	♥ 6
	♦ J 9 8 4
	♣ K J 7 3
SOUTH	
♠	6
♥	A K Q 10 5
♦	A 5 2
♣	9 8 6 5

North dealer Both sides vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	6 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

North's rebid of 2 NT shows 19 or 20 points in high cards with strength in the unbid suits. Since South has 13 points in high cards he wants to get to a slam if he can find a good fit.

South lies low at his second turn by showing his diamond support. There is no danger of a pass, since any under-game response to a 2 NT jump bid is forcing.

North shows his heart fit, and South wastes no time in getting to slam.

The Play

South can play this hand more easily if he counts winners rather than losers. He can expect to win 5 trumps, 4 diamonds, and 2 black aces. If the diamonds break badly, he will need one of the black queens as his 12th trick.

Which finesse should South take—clubs or spades?

Actually, he should take *neither*. He should force East to take the finesse for him—much as West was forced to yield a free finesse in No. 61.

Declarer draws trumps, cashes the top diamonds, and allows East to win the fourth round of diamonds.

Now East must return a black suit—giving declarer his 12th trick.

Always look for a chance to make an opponent take your finesses for you.

DEAL No. 63

NORTH

♠ K 10 8 7 2

♥ K J 7

♦ 10 4

♣ A 6 4

WEST

♠ 6

♥ Q 6 2

♦ K 6 5 3 2

♣ J 10 9 5

EAST

♠ 5 3

♥ 9 8 5 3

♦ J 9 8 7

♣ 8 3 2

SOUTH

♠ A Q J 9 4

♥ A 10 4

♦ A Q

♣ K Q 7

North dealer

Both sides vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	6 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

Norths jump to 3 ♠ after his original pass shows about 12 or 13 points in support of spades. (Some players would have opened the North hand.) North has 11 points in high cards, 1 point for the doubleton, and 1 point for extra length and strength in spades. If North decided to jump to 4 ♠ instead of only 3 ♠, nobody could blame him.

South has 22 points in high cards alone and can see that there must be a fine play for slam opposite any hand worth 12 or 13 points. There is no value in using the Blackwood Convention, for North cannot have enough to make a grand slam, in the light of his original pass.

The Play

South can afford to lose only one trick, so must win either a diamond or a heart finesse.

Which should he try?

Actually, South should try neither. He can make sure of the slam by forcing an opponent to give him a free finesse.

South draws trumps and clears out the clubs from both hands. Then he takes the ace of diamonds and gives up a diamond.

South doesn't care which opponent takes the diamond trick, for the slam is home either way. If he gets a heart return, there is a free finesse; if any other return, he can ruff in one hand and discard a heart from the other hand.

DEAL No. 64

NORTH	
♠ Q 8 3	
♥ J 10 7 6 3	
♦ Q 5	
♣ A K 4	
WEST	EAST
♠ K 10 4	♠ J 9 7 6 2
♥ K 5	♥ 4
♦ K J 10 9 4	♦ A 7 6 2
♣ 7 6 3	♣ J 10 5
SOUTH	
♠ A 5	
♥ A Q 9 8 2	
♦ 8 3	
♣ Q 9 8 2	

North dealer
East-West vulnerable

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
Pass	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

The Bidding

North's raise to 3 ♥ is not forcing, since he passed originally. However, South should accept the invitation to game since he has a sound opening bid with extra distributional values, two first round controls and a reasonably good suit.

The Play

After losing two diamond tricks, South must find a way to prevent the loss of a spade and a trump.

Normally, the best way to prevent the loss of a trump trick is to take the finesse through East for the king. This is the correct trump play even when only 3 trumps are missing.

In this case, however, South can combine the play of two suits. The ace of trumps should be taken—partly to see if the king drops.

When the king of trumps fails to drop, South strips out clubs from both hands and then leads trump. If the player with the king of trumps also has the king of spades, South will make the slam.

The combination chance of dropping a singleton king or finding the two kings in the same hand is better than the mere finesse in hearts.

We hope that you have enjoyed your Autobridge. There are many other refills available:

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Grimaud

FRANCE-CARTES, 27, avenue Pierre-1^{er}-de-Serbie - 75116 PARIS
Tél. (1) 47.20.14.21 / 47.20.05.25 - Télex 610.795

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